

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the Claims as follows:

1. **(Currently Amended)** A method for making pods **[(1)]** of filter material containing products for infusion, ~~characterised in that it~~ the method comprises ~~at the least~~ the following steps:

[-] making at least one compressed disk **[(2)]** of product, equivalent to a dose of the product, at respective dosing and forming stations ~~(3, 4)~~; said step of making the disk comprising a step of tamping to compress the product by translating and rotating a respective forming piston; and

[-] forming the pod **[(1)]** with the compressed disk **[(2)]** positioned inside the filter paper.

Claim 2 **(Canceled)**.

3. **(Currently Amended)** The method according to claim 1, where the pods **[(1)]** comprise two pieces ~~(5, 6)~~ of filter material placed over each other and sealed and containing a dose of the product for infusion, the method ~~being characterised in that it~~ further ~~comprises at least~~ comprising the following steps:

[-] feeding a first portion **[(5)]** of filter material;

[-] making the compressed disk **[(2)]** of product, equivalent to a dose of the product, at respective dosing and forming stations ~~(3, 4)~~;

[-] depositing the compressed disk **[(2)]** on the first portion **[(5)]** of filter material; and

[[-]] associating a second portion [[(6)]] of filter material with the first portion [[(5)]] of filter material to encapsulate the compressed disk [[(2)]] to form the pod [[(1)]].

4. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 3, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the first and second portions of filter material are obtained from webs (5, 6) of the same filter material.

5. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 3, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the first portion of filter material is obtained from a web [[(5)]] fed in a straight line.

6. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 3, ~~characterised in that~~ between the step of placing the compressed disk [[(2)]] and the associating step there is a further step of making in the second portion [[(6)]] of filter material a counter-impression [[(7)]] shaped to match the disk [[(2)]] and designed to be placed over the disk [[(2)]].

7. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1 or 3, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the step of making the disk [[(2)]] comprises the sub-steps of:

[[-]] depositing a dosed quantity of the product in a respective impression [[(8)]] while moving along a first defined path [[(P1)]] of the forming station [[(4)]]; and

[[-]] compressing the dose of product inside the impression [[(8)]] while moving along a second defined path [[(P2)]] following the first path [[(P1)]].

8. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 7, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein between the dosing and compressing sub-steps there is a step of levelling off the dosed product inside the impression [[(8)]].

9. **(Currently Amended)** The method according to claim 7, ~~characterised in that wherein~~ the first and second paths ~~(P1, P2)~~ are arc-shaped and cover respective angles (α) and (β) following each other.

10. **(Currently Amended)** The method according to claim 3, ~~characterised in that wherein~~ the depositing step is accomplished by allowing the compressed disk ~~[(2)]~~ to drop out of a respective impression ~~[(8)]~~ by gravity onto the first portion ~~[(5)]~~ of filter material.

11. **(Currently Amended)** The method according to claim 3, ~~characterised in that wherein~~ the depositing step is accomplished by allowing the compressed disk ~~[(2)]~~ of product to drop out of a respective impression ~~[(8)]~~ by gravity onto the first portion ~~[(5)]~~ of filter material where it is held in place by suction.

12. **(Currently Amended)** The method according to claim 3, ~~characterised in that wherein~~ the step of associating the first and second portions ~~(5, 6)~~ of filter material is performed by heat sealing.

13. **(Currently Amended)** The method according to claim 3, ~~characterised in that wherein~~ the associating step is followed by a step of cutting the first and second portions ~~(5, 6)~~ of filter material to form the pod ~~[(1)]~~.

14. **(Currently Amended)** An apparatus for making pods ~~[(1)]~~ containing products for infusion, the pods ~~[(1)]~~ ~~being of the type comprising~~ comprises two pieces of filter material placed over each other and sealed and containing a dose of the product for infusion; the apparatus ~~[(9)]~~ comprising at least two independent stations ~~(10, 11)~~ for feeding respective portions ~~(5, 6)~~ of filter material, the apparatus comprising and being ~~characterised in that it comprises at least the following:~~

[[1]] a station [[(12)]] for feeding the first portion [[(5)]] of filter material in a feed direction (A); ~~and at least to~~

[[1]] a station [[(3)]] for dosing individual doses of the product into at least one forming impression [[(8)]] located on means [[(4)]] for forming a respective disk [[(2)]] of the infusion product and releasing the disk [[(2)]] onto the first portion [[(5)]] of filter material; and

[[1]] a station [[(13)]] for associating the first portion [[(5)]] of filter material with the second portion [[(6)]] of filter material to form the pod [[(1)];],

wherein the feed station comprises:

a first endless belt trained around a pair of sheaves and having a perforated or porous surface; and

means for creating a vacuum at least at the working section of the first belt which feeds the first portion of filter material and on which the product disk is deposited.

15. **(Currently Amended)** The apparatus according to claim 14, ~~characterised in that,~~ wherein downstream of the dosing and forming station [[(3)]] in the feed direction (A), ~~[[it]] the apparatus further~~ comprises a station [[(14)]] for making a counter-impression [[(7)]] in the second portion [[(6)]] of filter material and placing the counter-impression [[(7)]] over the product disk [[(2)]].

16. **(Currently Amended)** The apparatus according to claim 14, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the two stations (10, 11) for feeding the filter material unwind respective webs (5, 6) of the filter material.

17. **(Currently Amended)** The apparatus according to claim 14, ~~characterised in that,~~ wherein downstream of the associating station ~~[[13]],~~ ~~[[it]]~~ the apparatus further comprises a station ~~[[15]]~~ for cutting off the disk ~~[[2]]~~ encapsulated in the two portions ~~(5,6)~~ of filter material to form a pod ~~[[1]]~~.

18. **(Currently Amended)** The apparatus according to claim 17, ~~characterised in that it comprises~~ further comprising a station ~~[[16]]~~ for separating the pod ~~[[1]]~~ from the waste material ~~[[17]]~~, which is collected in a recovery station ~~[[18]]~~.

Claim 19 **(Canceled)**.

20. **(Currently Amended)** The apparatus according to claim 14, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the dosing station ~~[[3]]~~ comprises a fixed hopper ~~[[23]]~~ mounted to face a first revolving drum ~~[[24]]~~, forming part of the forming means ~~[[4]]~~; the hopper ~~[[23]]~~ having an arc-shaped discharge portion to peripherally follow a passing surface of the first drum ~~[[24]]~~ in such manner that the product is dosed in a predetermined area.

21. **(Currently Amended)** The apparatus according to claim 14, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the means ~~[[4]]~~ for forming the disk ~~[[2]]~~ ~~comprise~~ comprises a first revolving drum ~~[[24]]~~ equipped with a plurality of pistons ~~[[25]]~~ arranged radially on the surface of the first drum ~~[[24]]~~ and having a hollow head ~~[[26]]~~ designed to receive a dose of the product fed by the dosing station ~~[[3]]~~; radial drive means ~~[[27]]~~ being provided between each piston ~~[[25]]~~ and the first drum ~~[[24]]~~ to act upon the pistons ~~[[25]]~~ in such manner as to impart a plurality of synchronised movements to the pistons ~~[[25]]~~ according to their angular positions on a circular path (P)

and so as to receive the product, compress the product to form the disk **[(2)]**, detach and deposit the disk **[(2)]** onto the first portion **[(5)]** of filter material.

22. **(Currently Amended)** The apparatus according to claim 21, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the radial drive means ~~comprise~~ comprises cam means **[(27)]** ~~consisting of~~ including at least one guide cam profile **[(28)]** stably associated with the interior of the drum **[(24)]** and engaged by a cam follower roller **[(29)]** for each piston **[(25)]**; each cam follower roller **[(29)]** being attached to the end of a respective connecting rod **[(30)]** whose other end is associated with a control pin **[(31)]** rotatably connected to the inside end of the cylinder **[(25c)]** of the piston **[(25)]** so as to drive the piston **[(25)]** radially in both directions according to the angular position of the piston **[(25)]** on the circular path (P).

23. **(Currently Amended)** The apparatus according to claims 21 and 22, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the cam means **[(27)]** ~~cause~~ causes each single piston **[(25)]** to be positioned according to movements referenced to a relative position or angular section of the circular path (P) and corresponding to:

[-] a first arc-shaped path section (P4) where the piston **[(25)]** is radially retracted towards the first drum **[(24)]** in such a way that the piston **[(25)]** moves into a product dosing configuration when **[(it)]** the piston reaches a point (P4A) corresponding to a its bottom dead centre of the piston;

[-] a second arc-shaped path section (P1) for dosing where the piston **[(25)]** is initially at the bottom dead centre (P4A), in such manner as to collect as much product as possible in the head **[(26)]**, and moves in a radial direction towards the outside of the first drum **[(24)]** until **[(it)]** the piston reaches the endpoint (P3) of the dosing station **[(3)]**

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where there is a wall **[(23a)]** for levelling off the product accommodated in the impression **[(8)]**; and

[-] a third arc-shaped path section (P2) for tamping the disc **[(2)]**, where the piston **[(25)]** moves radially towards the outside of the first drum **[(24)]** and against a stop wall **[(35)]** corresponding to its a top dead centre (P2M) of the piston where **[(it)] the piston** remains until **[(it)] the piston** starts on **[-]** a fourth arc-shaped path section (P5) where the piston **[(25)]** moves back up in order to facilitate detachment of the disc **[(2)]** from the impression **[(8)]** just before reaching the point (P0) where the disc **[(2)]** is released.

24. **(Currently Amended)** The apparatus according to claim 22, characterised in that wherein the cam profile **[(28)]** is divided into two arc-shaped sections ~~(28a, 28b)~~, a fixed lower section **[(28a)]** and an adjustable upper section **[(28b)]** corresponding to a part of the path (P) of the pistons **[(25)]** comprising at least one area where the product is filled into the pistons **[(25)]**.

25. **(Currently Amended)** The apparatus according to claim 21, characterised in that wherein the first drum **[(24)]** is equipped with rotational drive means **[(32)]** acting on each piston **[(25)]** and designed to continuously revolve each piston **[(25)]** about ~~its~~ a corresponding axis; the rotational drive means **[(32)]** comprising a fixed ring gear **[(33)]** mounted inside the first drum **[(24)]** and meshed with corresponding gear wheels **[(34)]** keyed to the respective cylinder **[(25c)]** of each piston **[(25)]** so that the pistons **[(25)]** revolve continuously as they move round the circular path (P), thus tamping the disk **[(2)]** and preventing **[(it)] the disk** from sticking inside the

head ~~[[26]]~~ of the piston ~~[[25]]~~ while enabling the disk ~~[[2]]~~ to be detached completely when ~~[[it]]~~ the disk is deposited on the first portion ~~[[5]]~~ of filter material.

26. **(Currently Amended)** The apparatus according to claim 21, ~~characterised in that there are~~ wherein arc-shaped walls ~~(35, 36)~~ round the outer surface of the first drum ~~[[24]]~~ designed to permit the pistons ~~[[25]]~~ to be pushed against the impressions ~~[[8]]~~ in a part of the circular path (P) and in such a way as to co-operate with the pistons ~~[[25]]~~ at least when the disk ~~[[2]]~~ is formed and compressed.

27. **(Currently Amended)** The apparatus according to claim 21, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the first portion ~~[[5]]~~ of filter material is fed close to the first drum ~~[[24]]~~ along an inclined path that partially and peripherally follows the surface of the first drum ~~[[24]]~~ in an area close to where the disk ~~[[2]]~~ is deposited on the first portion ~~[[5]]~~ of filter material.

28. **(Currently Amended)** The apparatus according to claim 21, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the station ~~[[14]]~~ for making the counter-impression ~~[[7]]~~ on the second portion ~~[[6]]~~ of filter material comprises a second drum ~~[[37]]~~ presenting a plurality of recesses ~~[[38]]~~ distributed uniformly on its outer surface to which the second portion ~~[[6]]~~ of filter material is held by suction; one section of a second endless forming belt ~~[[39]]~~ being located and operative on a portion of the surface of the second drum ~~[[37]]~~ and being equipped with protrusions ~~[[40]]~~ positioned and shaped to match the recesses ~~[[38]]~~ as the latter move round, thus making a counter-impression ~~[[7]]~~ on the second portion ~~[[6]]~~ placed between the second drum ~~[[37]]~~ and the second belt ~~[[39]]~~ by pushing the second portion ~~[[6]]~~ into the recesses ~~[[38]]~~.

29. **(Currently Amended)** The apparatus according to claim 28 ~~claims 14 and 28~~, characterised in that wherein the associating station **[(13)]** comprises a circular sealing element **[(41)]** positioned under the second drum **[(37)]** and designed to seal the first portion **[(5)]** of filter material, with the disk thereon **[(2)]** ~~on it~~, to the second portion **[(6)]** of filter material placed over the disk **[(2)]** to form a succession of sealed pods **[(1)]**.

30. **(Currently Amended)** The apparatus according to ~~claims~~ claim 17, characterised in that wherein the cutoff station **[(15)]** comprises a circular knife **[(15a)]** and a counter-knife **[(15b)]** positioned on opposite sides of a feed line (A) of the first and second portions **[(5, 6)]** of filter material sealed to each other and forming a succession of pods **[(1)]**.